

Woodrow Wilson's Message to the American People

Sea Girt, N. J., Oct. 19, 1912.

To the Voters of America:

I am glad to have an opportunity to state very simply and directly why I am seeking to be elected president of the United States. I feel very deeply that this is not an ambition a man should entertain for his own sake. He must seek to serve a cause, and must know very clearly what cause it is he is seeking to serve.

The cause I am enlisted in lies very plain to my view: The government of the United States, as now bound by the policies which have become characteristic of republican administration in recent years, is not free to serve the whole people impartially, and it ought to be set free. It has been tied up, whether deliberately or merely by unintentional development, with particular interests, which have used their power, both to control the government and to control the industrial development of the country. It must be freed from such entanglements and alliances. Until it is freed, it can not serve the people as a whole. Until it is freed, it can not undertake any program of social and economic betterment, but must be checked and thwarted at every turn by its patrons and masters.

In practically every speech that I make, I put at the front of what I have to say the question of the tariff and the question of the trusts, but not because of any thought of party strategy, because I believe the solution of these questions to lie at the very heart of the bigger question, whether the government shall be free or not. The government is not free because it has granted special favors to particular classes by means of the tariff. The men to whom these special favors have been granted have formed great combinations by which to control enterprise and determine the prices of commodities. They could not have done this had it not been for the tariff. No party, therefore, which does not propose to take away these special favors and prevent monopoly absolutely in the markets of the country sees even so much as the most ele-

mentary part of the method by which the government is to be set free.

The control to which tariff legislation has led, both in the field of politics and in the field of business, is what has produced the most odious feature of our present political situation, namely, the absolute domination of powerful bosses. Bosses can not exist without business alliances. With them politics is hardly distinguishable from business. Bosses maintain their control because they are allied with men who wish their assistance in order to get contracts, in order to obtain special legislative advantages, in order to prevent reforms which will interfere with monopoly or with their enjoyment of special exemptions. Merely as political leaders, not backed by money, not supported by securely entrenched special interests, bosses would be entirely manageable and comparatively powerless. By freeing the government, therefore, we at the same time break the power of the boss. He trades, he does not govern. He arranges, he does not lead. He sets the stage for what the people are to do; he does not act as their agent or servant, but as their director. For him the real business of politics is done under cover.

The same means that will set the government free from the influences which now constantly control it would set industry free. The enterprise and initiative of all Americans would be substituted for the enterprise and initiative of a small group of them. Economic democracy would take the place of monopoly and selfish management. American industry would have a new buoyancy of hope, a new energy, a new variety. With the restoration of freedom would come the restoration of opportunity.

Moreover, an administration would at last be set up in Washington, and a legislative regime, under which real programs of social betterment could be undertaken as they can not now. The government might be serviceable for many things. It might assist in a hundred ways to safeguard the lives and the health and promote the comfort and the happiness of the people; but it can do these things only if its actions be dis-

interested, only if they respond to public opinion, only if those who lead government see the country as a whole, feel a deep thrill of intimate sympathy with every class and every interest in it, know how to hold an even hand and listen to men of every sort and quality and origin, in taking counsel what is to be done. Interest must not fight against interest. There must be a common understanding and a free action all together.

The reason that I feel justified in appealing to the voters of this country to support the democratic party at this critical juncture in its affairs is that the leaders of neither of the other parties propose to attack the problem of a free government at its heart. Neither proposes to make a fundamental change in the policy of the government with regard to tariff duties. It is with both of them in respect of the tariff merely a question of more or less, merely a question of lopping off a little here and amending a little there; while with the democrats it is a question of principle. Their object is to cut every special favor out, and cut it out just as fast as it can be cut out without upsetting the business processes of the country. Neither does either of the other parties propose seriously to disturb the supremacy of the trusts. Their only remedy is to accept the trusts and regulate them, notwithstanding the fact that most of the trusts are so constructed as to insure high prices, because they are not based upon efficiency but upon monopoly. Their success lies in control. The competition of more efficient competitors, not loaded down by the debts created when the combinations were made, would embarrass and conquer them. The trusts want the protection of the government, and are likely to get it if either the republican or the so-called "progressive" party prevails.

Surely this is a cause. Surely the questions of the pending election, looked at from this point of view, rise into a cause. They are not merely the debates of a casual party contest. They are the issues of life and death to a nation which must be free in order to be strong. What will patriotic men do? WOODROW WILSON.

ROOSEVELT VS. PACIFIC COAST

Extracts from President Roosevelt's message of December 4, 1906:

"I recommend to the congress that an act be passed specifically providing for the naturalization of Japanese who come here intending to become American citizens.

"One of the great embarrassments attending the performance of our international obligations is the fact that the statutes of the United States are entirely inadequate. They fail to give to the national government sufficiently ample power through United States courts and by the use of the army and navy to protect aliens in the rights secured to them under solemn treaties which are the law of the land. I therefore earnestly recommend that the criminal and civil statutes of the United States be so amended and added to as to enable the president acting for the United States government which is responsible in our national relations to enforce the rights of aliens under treaties. Even as the law now is something can be done under the federal government toward this end and in the matter now before me affecting the Japanese everything that it is in my power to do will be done and all of the forces, military and civil, of the United States which I may lawfully employ will be so employed."

Extract from President Roosevelt's message as shown by the Congressional Record, Vol. 41, part 1, page 491. December 18, 1906:

"I authorized and directed Secretary Metcalf to state that if there was failure to protect persons and property, then the entire power of the federal government within the limits of the constitution would be used promptly and vigorously to force the observance of our treaty and the supreme law of the land, which treaty guaranteed to Japanese residents free and perfect protection; and to this end everything in my power would be done, and all the forces of the United States, both civil and military, which I could lawfully employ would be employed."

Mr. Roosevelt evidently thinks that he is the Moses to lead the people out of bondage, but he has mistaken the call. He has mistaken a steel trust furnace for a "burning bush"—it was not the Lord's voice, but Perkins' that he heard.

GOVERNOR WILSON ON A CAMPAIGN YARN

Governor Wilson has issued the following statement which will be of general interest: "My attention has been called to the statement that I have become a member of the Knights of Columbus. This is, of course, not true. I have not been asked to join the order, either as a regular or as an honorary member and am not eligible because I am not a Catholic. I must warn my friends everywhere that statements of this kind are all campaign inventions, devised to serve a special purpose. This particular statement has been circulated in selected quarters to create the impression that I am seeking to identify myself politically with the great Catholic body. In other quarters all sorts of stories are being set afloat to prove that I am hostile to the Catholics. It is a very petty and ridiculous business. If all these fabrications could be brought together they would make very amusing reading. They would leave a very flat taste in the mouth for they would entirely neutralize one another and prove that I was nothing and everything. I am a normal man, following my own natural course of thought, playing no favorites and trying to treat every creed and class with impartiality and respect."

THE CAMPAIGN CLOSED

We are within one week of the election and so far as outward appearance goes the democratic party has gained continuously since the Baltimore convention. Governor Wilson has shown remarkable judgment in the advice he has given as to organization work and in his speeches. He has more than justified the expectations of his friends. Governor Marshall has added to his reputation as a campaigner and rendered great assistance on the stump. Governor Wilson has focused attention upon two issues, the tariff issue and the trust issue, both of which emphasize the importance of taking the government out of the hands of those who use it to secure privileges and favors. The polls all show that Mr. Wilson has extraordinary strength in the colleges, and his support among laboring men has increased as the record of his work as governor has become known.

At this time no one can say with any certainty which wing of the republican party has

the most feathers on it. At first it seemed as if Mr. Roosevelt might lead, but there has been a strengthening of the Taft lines during the last month. The deplorable attack upon Mr. Roosevelt temporarily checked the Taft fight, but the wound is healing rapidly and the effect of the murderous attempt will be less than it would have been had it come nearer the election or had it been more serious.

The disclosures as to the campaign funds has weakened both Mr. Taft and Mr. Roosevelt for they throw light upon the revolting system by which the predatory interests have sought to control the government through secret contributions.

The panic argument has not frightened the voters as much as the republican leaders expected it to. This is due in part to the fact that the scare has been worn threadbare by use in four previous campaigns and partly because a voter can not, even if frightened, hope to defeat Mr. Wilson with either of the republican candidates.

I see no reason to reduce the estimate which I made at the close of the Baltimore convention, namely, that Mr. Wilson will have a plurality of 2,000,000 votes. It is more likely to be greater than that, than less.

MR. ROOSEVELT RECOVERING

The Commoner congratulates Colonel Roosevelt and the country on his rapid recovery and welcomes him back to the arena of politics in which he has for so long been so picturesque a figure. Health to him. May no harm befall.

NOT FROM ABRAHAM

The Southern Lumberman prints the following: Roosevelt says he got most of the best of his policies from Lincoln. Many thought he meant President Lincoln, when all the while he was just referring to Lincoln, Neb.

Mr. Taft is weaker than Mr. Roosevelt in some states and in others Mr. Roosevelt is the weaker. The weaker faction should help Mr. Wilson defeat the other faction.

Mr. Ryan says that he would have subscribed to help nominate any one EXCEPT MR. BRYAN. Thanks awfully.